



Illinois State Association of Counties

POSITION STATEMENT

JANUARY 22, 2021

ELECTION MODERNIZATION

SUPPORT

The manner in which elections are conducted is changing as increasing numbers of voters take advantage of opportunities to vote early or by mail. Despite these changing preferences among voters, counties are stuck in the past and are required to operate and fund, at the same historic levels, a statutorily defined number of polling places on Election Day. This outdated approach diverts scarce resources away from rising vote by mail costs.

Current Law:

Current law requires counties to establish and fund election day polling places reflective of the number of precincts that exist based upon the population of the county.

The Illinois Election Code requires county boards in counties to establish election districts into units consisting of as near to 500 voters as is practicable, but not, under any circumstances, to exceed 800 voters. If any election precinct contains more than 600 registered voters, the county board may divide the precinct into election precincts so that each precinct shall contain as close to 500 voters as possible.

This requirement persists despite the increasing prevalence of early voting and voting by mail reducing election day turnout at the precinct level. Counties do not have the statutory flexibility to allocate existing election funds toward costs associated with evolving voting practices because of the requirement to fund so many election day voting locations.

Proposed Change:

The General Assembly and Governor should amend the law to grant local election jurisdictions the flexibility to operate regional voting centers and to more efficiently manage the election process based on the evolving needs of their voters.

**COUNTIES SHOULD HAVE FLEXIBILITY TO CONDUCT ELECTIONS
CONSISTENT WITH HOW THEIR RESIDENTS CHOOSE TO CAST BALLOTS.**